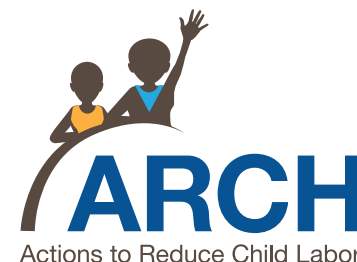




# ARCH PROJECT'S LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM IMPROVES OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCERS AND TRANSFORMS THE LIFE OF JERRY AND HIS FAMILY



Jerry, the proud pig farmer, who transitioned from fire coal burning and rubber tapping to pig production through the ARCH Project's intervention in his community.

In an effort to alleviate the high cost of living that leads to an increase in poverty rates among vulnerable households, the ARCH Project's Livelihoods Program has trained 3,323 households (166 adult producer groups) in various livelihood activities including poultry,

piggery, goat-raising, and cassava and vegetable production. These groups were trained in a six-month intensive hands-on agriculture program in the three major project areas: Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties.

Jerry T. lives with his wife and five children in Gwee Town, Todee District, Montserrado County. Before the arrival of the ARCH Project in his community, Jerry and his family had been surviving on the little earnings he received from fire coal burning, which involves slowly burning wood until it becomes a coal-like material that can be used for cooking. To supplement this income, Jerry found a job from a local rubber farm owner to rubber tap on commission. However, his earnings still could not meet his family's needs. Jerry's low earnings made it particularly difficult to keep his eldest son in school. He found it necessary to take the 12-year-old boy with him to the fire coal mine and the rubber farm as a supplementary breadwinner.

“I am able to do it for my children now. Thank God for ARCH”

JERRY



When the ARCH Project entered Gwee Town in 2013, Jerry could hardly pay the regular \$500 LRD yearly tuition fee for his son at the local Nuquay Public School. "My son never used to go to school regularly because he used to help me," Jerry said. But the ARCH project identified his son as a beneficiary, giving him a School Success Kit that included uniforms, pencils, pens, copybooks and a book bag. Now, Jerry's son is attending third grade at Nuquay Public School.

Since 2015, ARCH has provided support to vulnerable households of children identified as engaging in child labor or at risk of engaging in child labor. These households have been organized into producer groups within various areas of agriculture, including cassava, poultry, piggery and goat-raising. After completing the agriculture training, each producer group was given a starter kit to assist them in starting their own businesses. These starter kits were tailored to each producer group's training focus, and contained either an agro-processing machine, a cassava grater machine, a cassava press machine, a hammer mill, a vegetable dryer, assorted materials to refurbish the animal houses or farm tools (cement, zinc, wheelbarrow, cutlass, axe, hoe, brush, assorted wire nails, wire mesh, shovel, rake, head pan, knife and weighing scale). Some starter kits also included a treadle manual water pump to help water gardens, as well as a vegetable dryer for vegetable preservation.

ARCH staff worked with Liberian welding shops to produce these machines locally to ensure they met the needs of the producer groups. Made of strong, reliable materials, the machines work quickly and are capable of producing high-quality food. Following the training, producer groups were given possession of the machines, enabling them to add value to their production and increase profits. This, in turn, will help to reduce poverty in homes, a main determinant of child labor. Consequently, households will be more likely to send their children to school, increasing school attendance and retention.

Jerry took an interest in raising pigs and went through the six months of training, which included instruction on livestock production and

management. His group graduated and was certified, confirming their completion of the training. The ARCH Project provided Jerry with 18 bags of cement to improve his pig pen. Just as he was committed to his previous work, Jerry did not take this opportunity for granted. He labored tirelessly at raising his pigs and did all he could to see the first piglets be born. His efforts paid off, and he had 11 piglets his first season. "I am so happy with the piglets," Jerry said. Jerry sold three of the piglets and used the money to supplement what he received from the project to do some major renovations to his piggery.

Jerry now sees himself as being prepared to face the challenges ahead. "I am able to do it for my children now," Jerry said. "Thank God for ARCH."

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